

HB13~1111 Testimony

5/1/13

My name is Joanie Coffey and I am here today as the president of the Colorado Coalition for Natural Health, as well as representing myself, as a Naturopathic Doctor who practices traditional naturopathy. I am asking you to vote **no** on HB-1111.

HB-1111 seeks to register a handful of "naturopathic physicians" who attended specific CNME schools and who practice a form of "allopathic naturopathy" which runs counter to the traditional teachings of naturopathy. Traditional Naturopathy has **nothing** to do with the practice of medicine. Naturopathy means "a non-invasive system of health practice that employs no surgery or synthetic drugs, but instead, uses natural health modalities, substances and education to promote health and assist the body's natural healing processes.

Unfortunately, there are two separate professions that now share the title of Naturopathic Doctor.

#1 - There are the proponents of this bill who graduate with the title of Naturopathic **Physician** or Naturopathic **Medical** Doctor and who seek to practice as primary care physicians, as evidenced by the multitude of personal websites describing their services. Also, there are many organizational websites (www.aanmc.org, www.coloradond.org, www.naturopathic.org, etc.) that all refer to these naturopathic physicians as being PCP's with focuses on family medicine, oncology, pediatrics, midwifery, etc. The goal of these medical ND's is to gradually increase their scope of practice to include medical modalities, such as minor surgeries, obstetrics and prescriptive authority. The medical ND's have testified in the past that they are practicing medicine without a license and some of them have been arrested for performing their medical modalities. The CNME schools have a long history of inadequate training, loss of accreditation, conflict of interest and integrity issues.

#2 - The other profession of Naturopathic Doctors are those who espouse and practice naturopathy as it was originally intended. These Naturopathic Doctors are **not** primary care physicians, are **not** involved in the practice of medicine, do **not** prescribe pharmaceuticals, **nor** do they perform surgery. Instead, they use natural modalities such as special diets, herbs, vitamins, food, air, water, exercise, etc., along with educating clients to assist the body's intrinsic self-healing process. The traditional ND's are well educated and worthy to serve the public. The definition of doctor is: "a person who has been awarded a higher academic degree in any field of knowledge". Dora has previously established that this group of ND's and natural health practitioners do not pose an eminent or discernible risk of significant harm to the public's health and safety, since they do not practice medicine. Consumer protection is essential, but registration or licensure is an ineffective and unnecessary way to protect the public as past incidences of harm in this

profession relate to criminal activity and not to negligent practice or incompetency. In fact, if HB-1111 is adopted, the consumers would be at **more** risk for harm as you would be registering this select group to perform medical procedures that they are **not** qualified to provide.

A comprehensive report by the national institute of medicine stated that 1 .5 million Colorado citizens receive health care services from complementary and alternative healthcare practitioners. This accounts for a vast amount of revenue for the state of Colorado which would be lost (in the form of personal income, state sales tax and income tax) if thousands of natural health practitioners are put out of business. HB-1111 would create a monopoly for the few practitioners who attended "chosen" schools and **exclude** thousands of ND's and many thousands of other natural health practitioners in Colorado who practice traditional naturopathy and force them to abandon their chosen profession. This not only limits consumer choice, but will also lead to an increase in cost of services. If HB-1111 is passed, thousands of ND's who practice Traditional Naturopathy will lose their well-deserved ND title and become unemployed, due to the overlapping scope of practice and title. (Please see your handout.) The ND title is very important because Medical Doctors refer patients to these practitioners based on their title and many nutritional products, devices and continuing education seminars are only available to practitioners with the ND title. This will also negatively affect my 3,000 clients who will lose me as their natural health practitioner. CCNH has worked for months to try and make sure that this bill ensures the right to practice for all NHP's without the practitioners being in violation of the MPA. Unfortunately, the proponents and legal counsel of HB-1111 cannot guarantee that the language does legally protect all NHP's. A fair and logical solution is to have the bill proponents use the title "Registered Naturopathic Doctor" and leave the ND title for those practitioners who do not need to be registered, since they do not practice medicine.

Education - there are many naturopathic schools in the United States and most of them incorporate online, distance learning curriculums in conjunction with on site clinicals. Many medical colleges today offer online courses to their students. I have over 10,000 hours of education between my ND, PhD in natural health and CNC degrees. My curriculum included nutrition, natural health, naturopathy, biology, anatomy, physiology, herbology, homeopathy, reflexology, acupressure, *mind/body* medicine, disease prevention, massage, chemistry, genetics, biological psychology, etc. I am a Certified Traditional Naturopath by the ANCB, Board Certified Naturopath by the ANMA, Board Certified in Integrative Medicine and a Registered Naturopath by the Council on Naturopathic Registration and Accreditation. I work extensively with conventional medical physicians to provide complementary health care to support the patient's self-healing potential as well as assist in prevention, restoration and promotion of optimal health. **Please vote 'no' on HB-1111.** Thank you for your time today.